

## **ZONING REQUEST WAIVER JUSTIFICATION**

### **EDWARDS AUTO GROUP**

### **PROPOSED SUBARU DEALERSHIP EXPANSION**

The Edwards Auto Group building at 1011 34<sup>th</sup> Avenue in recent years has been a Mitsubishi car dealership, and is part of a group of other company owned auto dealerships located in the immediate vicinity of this building. The Edwards Group recently relocated the Mitsubishi dealership to another previous dealership building in Bellevue, NE that has been vacant for several years. As part of dealership family, the Edwards Group currently has a Subaru building that is small to Subaru standards and is looking to relocate their existing Subaru dealership to the previous Mitsubishi building. To accommodate some of the Subaru dealership standards, they are looking at expanding the proposed Subaru building to accommodate some of their service and sales needs. The proposed project would incorporate an approximate 5,000 square foot addition to the existing facility, and would also incorporate a renovation of portions of the existing building to accommodate current dealership trends and requirements.

Existing Conditions: The existing building in question has been a long standing car dealership with a display lot that has hard surface parking on generally the full lot area. Existing paving setbacks from the existing perimeter property lines varies from zero setback along the interior lot lines and the west property line, a 3'-4' average setback on the north property line, an approximate average setback of slightly over 2' on the property line at the southeast portion of the site and an average of approximately 25' along the east property line where there is a drainage swale that is located along the east end of the site.

Section 15.23.020 of the Council Bluffs Zoning Ordinances takes into consideration parking setback requirements. Under Paragraph 15.23.020(a) of the Code, the Code states "Whenever an addition to an existing structure is proposed, all of the applicable provisions contained within this chapter regarding number of spaces, area or usability of existing parking, loading, and unloading spaces or other areas requiring a paved surface, shall be complied with." The provisions within this section include a 5 foot setback from property lines for parking surfaces with a curb height of at least six inches along the parking edge. It is apparent that this requirement has been implemented into the Code after the existing building and site improvements were completed many years ago. Based on initial discussions with the City on this project, it has been indicated that the parking setback and curb requirements would be required to be accommodated as part of the proposed project.

With the requirements being indicated for the revisions that would need to be implemented under the current Zoning Code due to the proposed building addition included as part of this project, a Request for Waiver of these parking lot setback requirements is being submitted for consideration for this project. Justifications for requesting this waiver include the following:

1. The existing display lot area for the dealership is already tight for vehicle display and is actually below the suggested levels of available vehicle counts as directed by Subaru. Removal of additional existing paving further reduces some of the available parking and vehicle display areas.
2. The existing surface display lots currently surface drains to the swales located to the north along 34<sup>th</sup> Avenue and to the swale located to the east portion of the site. Inclusion of the curb requirements as dictated within the Off-Street Parking Requirements would impede the current

surface drainage and would require regrading of portions of the site and replacement of significant quantities of asphalt in portions of the existing lot area.

3. The paving of the existing parking lot runs up to the property line of the back parking area of Western Engineering Co., which is the adjacent property owner located immediately to the south of this property. The Western Engineering parking lot also extends to the property line, and also sheet flows a portion of their drainage across the Edwards Auto lot to the swale located at the east of the Edwards paving area. By requiring a 5 foot setback for parking at this location, this creates a potential drainage issue for the adjacent property owner and a potential maintenance nuisance for the Edwards Group.
4. The existing building is currently set back approximately 10 feet from the south property line and is currently paved up to the property line and butts into the paving of the adjacent property owner whose paving extends up to the property line. This area is currently being utilized as a secondary vehicle access around the property along this property line. It is the intent to keep this area as a secondary vehicle access route, where the implementation of the 5 foot setback would eliminate this access.
5. Snow Removal: Other potential option items in lieu of curbing around the lot have been discussed such as concrete wheel stops. Options such as these can become bigger maintenance and operational impediments during winter months when snow removal comes into play. Free standing wheel stops would not allow for full removal of snow from the parking lot without dislodging the stops and constant repositioning. Curbs also become an issue if the curbs impede the pushing of snow out to get closer to the swale areas. Depending on snowfall totals, if snow cannot be pushed far enough out from the edge of the required parking lot area, inadequate removal of snow can further diminish access around the display lot.

#### Overall Parking Setup:

Based on current parking requirements as required in the Zoning Code, upwards of 34-38 parking stalls will be required to serve both customer and employee parking on the site. Based on input from the Edwards Auto staff, it has been indicated that employee parking has been located at the extreme south side/ southeast corner of the existing lot area and will be maintained that way. All other stalls indicated on the plan that are closer to the building will be dedicated for vehicle sales customers or for vehicle service.

As previously noted, Subaru has recommendations for on-site vehicle requirements for new vehicle display, used vehicle display, service vehicle storage, sales customer parking and service customer parking. Under the preliminary numbers that Subaru is talking, they are looking at just around 299 vehicles spots available as a recommended inventory and customer parking count. With the layout that is included, we are showing the potential for 222 vehicles available to the site for customer and employee use, as well as vehicle display. With the parking lot setback, the lot lost 9 stalls from what could have been included in this count. And as also noted, the aisle space is very tight and we may lose an additional row of vehicles from the lot (potentially 20+ vehicles) if the size of the lot is diminished much further. An item of note, Subaru is allowing the use of an adjacent Edwards Lot as a staging area for some of the vehicle count required by Subaru, but the operation efficiencies are diminished with lots separated remotely so maximizing the vehicles on the site is important from an operational standpoint.

### **Plan of Operation**

Site Usage: The existing facility is a car dealership. With the proposed renovation, the use will still be maintained as a dealership under a different manufacturer's flag.

Hours of Operation: Dealership hours would generally be 6:30AM – 8:00PM Monday through Saturday, Closed Sundays.

Number of Persons Employed: Up to 30 at maximum (service and sales employees)

Number of Customers Utilizing Site at Maximum Capacity: Anticipated 10 per hour average under peak customer times.

Signage: Existing pole and building mounted signage will be changed to accommodate signage requirements to match up with flagship dealership requirements.

Lighting: Existing parking lot lighting systems will be reutilized. There is consideration for possible changeover to LED lighting at some time in the future.



View looking southwest from 34<sup>th</sup> Ave toward existing building. Existing lighting would remain as is, existing signage would be changed to reflect new flagship dealership. The white line in the parking area is the approximate location of the 5' parking setback requirement.



View looking southeast from 34<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Existing lighting would remain. The white line in the parking area is the approximate location of the 5' parking setback requirement.





View looking southeast from S. 11<sup>th</sup> Street. Existing paving extends to existing property line, which is the east side of the drainage swale along 11<sup>th</sup> Street.



View looking northeast from S. 11<sup>th</sup> Street. Existing paving extends to existing property line on the west, which is the east side of the drainage swale along 11<sup>th</sup> Street. Paving also extends to south property line to abut the paving of the adjoining property owner.